342 hut. The door is equipped with projecting pivots on top and bottom, the ends turning in two troughs carved into the door-frame.

The overhanging roof protects most of the wall from being damaged by driving rain, and the darkness inside is also a protection against the sun-loving flies. The average hut needs re-thatching every 5 to 8 years, and an additional coating of clay plaster mixed with straw every 2 to 3 years. Old huts, abandoned due to fire, war, death [777] by sickness, etc., are considered unlucky and are not rebuilt. Sometimes their remaining walls are used as windbreaks for garden crops.

Interior architecture consists of the following:
(1) a high-fencelike partition of bamboo ("mäqa") to give privacy to the master and his wife, usually center-right from the door, with a special high elevation on which the bed of the couple is set; another high partition, usually to the left of the door or toward the rear, for nighttime shelter for calves, goats or the family mule. This fencelike, permanent partition is called "get" or "gedgedda";
●352 (2) a solid clay bench which runs along half the interior of the walls, on one or both sides of the door, about 16 inches high, called "mädäb" usually covered with sheepskins. On this clay bench men sit during the day with visitor, while sipping barley beer, and at night the children sleep on them, covering themselves with the sheepskins;
(3) on top of a center-rear elevation of rock and clay, up to 42" high, rests the "alga", the master's bed, 15"-30" high. It consists of a wooden frame on four wooden

352 legs; thongs of sundried oxhide interlace the wooden frame diagonally giving the bed a springy quality. In case of great poverty, wooden slats are used instead of oxhide, and a cowskin is placed on top. The leather alga seems to resemble the leather thong bed of ancient Greece.

354 (4) The fireplace set up front of center, 5 of 3 cornerstones ("medeja", or, "gulcha"), so that the broad baking-pan and clay cooking pots are well supported.

352 [251] (5) From the center pole to the rear are various clay bins ("riq", made of a frame of willow branches, cowdung and mud) [415] holding threshed grain. Behind the fireplace is the "gu-rej", the storage space for plow, axe, adze, beer and water [482] pots, skin sacks for transporting grain to market; sometimes a litter ("garēza") used for transporting rocks, beams, sick or dead persons, the wounded in war, and formerly an indispensable equipment for corvée. Also behind the cen-[251] ter pole is the indoor grain bin made of concentric rings of clay and fine straw, dried outside, and inside assembled to a height of 60".

(6) In front of the center pole stands the portable "mās-sob", the table woven tightly of reeds in the shape of a round breadbasket, on which the daily bread, "enjara" is served. A small massob may have a diameter at top of 18" and may be 20" high. The height would come from a triangular leg of 7", on which an inverted, triangular leg faces upward 10" in the manner of an hourglass; and another 3" from the height of the top tablet. The hollow leg tapers to a waist, then widens again toward the top. It has a depression in the center, so that the spiced meat stew can

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

251 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. This was done in the past particularly at dinner [754] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the [609] presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and [554] country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, "säqäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates [539] this low regard of a säqäla:

"Of children, the worst is the bastard;
of foods, the hardest is beans;
of clothing, the poorest is nätäla (half-toga);
of housing, the poorest is säqäla."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nätäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the säqäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

342 sega byet - where meat is stored after sundrying in strips;

wät byet - the kitchen hut;

gemja byet - the "treasury" house, general storehouse of tools and weapons, drums, decorations.

tej byet - honeymead brewery; talla byet - beer brewery, worked by women.

engeda byet- guest hut;

adarash - reception hut, larger, less solid, used for banqueting;

mänyeta byet - (lit. bedroom house), the master's bedroom hut;

"mad byet" - dining hut for daily dining.

565 The noble also has carpets ("sägaja") to sit on or,
●352 in feudal tents, to use as tapestry. These are carried from long distances, where specialists live, or are imported. He also has hardwood stools ("dekkwa") to sit on, cut out of solid tree trunks. In a wooden storage box he has one or several burnos, and one or several "kaba" (a dark, woolen mantle). Guests receive their coffee in small imported glazed china cups instead of clay ones, and the reed table is a "massob wor̤ä", with dyed braids of imported dyes, in geometric designs.

824 C. What Nature Provides: Lumbering, Hunting, Fishing,
461 Collecting

Much of what little ingenuity goes into Amhara material culture is applied to the direct exploitation of natural resources. He would rather spend days and weeks

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

285 especially the use of milk (also found in pottery), is typi-
415 cally African.

Reeds, fibers (including the musa ensete and baobab), and grasses already mentioned are used to produce many types of articles, equal in variety only to pottery, and in numbers even exceeding.

285 The reed table, "mässob" is one of the most note-
415 worthy, for every household has several, in different sizes,
352 and usually one with ornamental geometric designs woven into it by means of dyed reeds. In principle it is a combination breadbasket and table, for by lifting the lid the former turns into the latter. The diameter at the top may be as much as 2 feet, just high enough to be comfortable for eating while seated on a mat on the ground. Thus the cylindrical, almost hourglass-shaped leg of the same tightly woven reeds, may be from 1 foot to 2 feet high. The lid fits tightly inside, so that flies and even ants cannot enter; it is of the same type found in the Sudan and parts of North Africa.

285 The next most noteworthy item of woven fiber is the
293 famous sun umbrella, "jan ṭela" (lit. the emperor's shade, from "zehon", elephant). Formerly a royal prerogative, then a feudal one, it is now owned by every peasant housewife, and in provincial towns purchasable at the big market for ETH$2.-(US$0.80). This umbrella is unfoldable, made of strong ribs of split bamboo (called "qerqaha"), bent almost semi-circular; the central wooden stick ending in a woven plate above the shade itself; the sections woven tight enough to keep out the sun, though not watertight.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

648 each one with his whip[1] in his hand, and they would not let us enter, saying that we should give them some pepper, and they kept us for a good while at the gate. Passing through this gate we arrived at another, at which stood three other porters who seemed more honourable persons; these made us wait more than half an hour standing on a little straw, and the heat was so great it killed us. Upon this the ambassador sent to say that he should bid us come in or he would return to his abode. Then the message went by one who seemed to be of higher position, and word came that we should enter. The Barnagais was in this manner, in a [342] large house of one story (for in this country there are not [352] houses of several stories), sitting on a bedstead, as is their custom, fitted with poor curtains; he had sore eyes, and his wife was sitting at the head of the bedstead. Having made our obeisance, the ambassador offered him a *master* to cure him; and he said that he had no need of him, as though he did not thank him for it. Upon this the ambassador asked him as a favour, and required on the part of Prester John, that he should order equipment to be given us for our journey, assuring him how much service he would be doing in this way to the king of Portugal, which would be well repaid to him by the King and by his Captain-major; and he, the ambassador, would tell Prester John the honour and favour which he received from him. The Barnagais asking what it was that we required, the ambassador said he wanted oxen and asses for baggage, and mules for the Portuguese. To this the Barnagais replied that he could not give any mules, and that we might buy them ourselves; that he would give orders for the rest, and would send a son of his with us to the court of Prester John, and with that he gave us our dismissal.

[1] *Azorague*, a kurbach, or whip of hide, *cravache*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church. 681

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him. 793

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means emperor, and he is called Neguz, which means king. 643

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves. 752 757

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thousand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 621 361 342 352 415 264 262 252 373 314 009

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

habit is not confined to Abyssinia! The second, which is more curious, is that of protection against the sun's rays. In this connection it is interesting to recall that Mr Mansfield Parkyns, who spent three years in Abyssinia, used no head covering of any sort at any time other than a coating of butter, which he says he found as effective as any hat.

The third (and most frivolous) reason is that butter in the hair hampers the free movement (and consequent irritation) of the little creatures that live there. There is possibly something in this, as a "head-scratcher", in the form of a blunt silver or wooden pin, is a general ornament, as incidentally is also an "ear-cleaner" which resembles a small salt-spoon.

In some parts of the country where the hairdressing mode is of an elaborate character, the women, when lying down to sleep, use wooden head-rests for their necks, made of a slightly curved piece of wood supported on a sort of foot, the whole being a few inches high. Some of these are quite elaborately carved or coloured; but however pleasing they may be to the eye—and I have seen some very pretty ones—they must make exceedingly uncomfortable pillows, and the use of them appears to argue an even greater interest in personal appearance than European women display. These head-rests are of very ancient origin; they are curiously similar to the one discovered in Tutankhamen's tomb.

The more wealthy Abyssinians are very partial to scents and scented hair oils; the strength of the scent is more important to them than its quality, and the shops in Addis Ababa do a brisk trade in inferior

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

all together in their single room; if to the aroma arising from this combined population be added the acrid smoke from a fire made of dung-cakes, and a plentiful accompaniment of fleas and other insects, the joys of a night's shelter in such quarters may well be imagined.

The house nearly always stands in a very large piece of ground surrounded by a mud and stone wall. It is a curious habit of theirs that in building the wall they generally start with the gateway. Occasionally, for one reason or another, the wall-building suffers a hitch, and one sees the quaint spectacle of a gateway (sometimes with a gate), a few yards of wall, and then nothing to impede general ingress. Some of the chiefs, however, are now building themselves better places, especially those that have been on missions to Europe. But even among these an ordinary *tukul* sometimes suffices, and most of the important chiefs I met in Abyssinia were content with most primitive installations.

The *tukuls* of the poorer class are mostly constructed in a circular form of sticks plastered inside and out with mud. The roof, which is made separately and put on last, is cone-shaped, made of sticks or cane bound strongly together with strips of bark and then thatched: the latter is an art in which the Abyssinians particularly excel. The roof extends two or three feet from the walls; thus the torrential rains run off easily and leave the hut perfectly dry.

Inside, a part is usually divided off by a length of sheeting suspended on a string, behind which, on a raised platform, the family sleep on couches or beds made of wood and grass and covered with skins; blankets are uncommon, and the *chammas* in which

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

they are rolled form their only covering apart from the clothes which have been worn during the day. The remaining part of the hut is used for everything—living, cooking, eating, and also spinning in the rainy season—but of course in the dry weather much work is done outside. Apart from one or two rough wooden stools, furniture is rare or non-existent in these huts. In most of them, however, there are one or more wooden packing-cases containing the owners' most precious possessions, and fastened with a padlock and key; the remainder of their worldly goods are hung on hooks or put in niches in the walls. A form of basket-table is used at meal-times as both dish and plate, and drinking-cups made of horn are still to be seen in the provinces, though imported cups are now fairly common in Addis. A draught of mead from a cow's horn a couple of feet long is delightfully reminiscent of the pictures of the Danish and Norse invaders of England in the distant past.

342 352 [416]

[pp. 82–173 have not been processed for the files.–Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geography than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in response to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But *tĕff*, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which ornament the homes of the well-to-do.

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural-colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gondar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *ṭēff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 512 462 [854] [853] the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] [291] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 [244] When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *tallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, supper is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] [782] [513] [352] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4.5 (1958-1961)1965 MPS Amhara MPS

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FIG. 13—Clergy and government school students observing national holiday

873
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FIG. 14—Inside a secondary school library

[P. 142-B]